



Erie County Youth Bureau  
810 East Ferry Street  
Buffalo, NY 14211

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## Erie County Youth Board:

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- Kendall Bazinet
- Kelli Blakeley
- David Caywood
- Bill Conrad
- Paul Denning
- Susan Lumadue
- Juliana Norton
- Mitchell Nowakowski
- Kathleen O'Brien
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- Brian Rochford
- Ryan Taughrin
- Carolynn Welch

# Youth Bureau Chronicle

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Spring 2015

## From the Deputy's Desk

Spring is HERE and summer is on its WAY! With warm weather, barbeques, family gatherings and summer programming quickly approaching, I desire that we be safe, be smart and be well.

During the spring and summer months I encourage each of us to create opportunities for our youth and young adults to act responsibly, be a role model, link responsibilities with positive things and own the process. By doing the aforementioned, it will allow young adults to have more control over their lives and understand that their life matters!

Keep in mind that developing responsibility takes practice and doesn't happen overnight. It's a learning process. I shared this week with my staff that "you don't have to change history, but you do have to change business as usual" (Kouses & Posner 2012).

As always, many thanks for the great work you do for our community, children and families and the commitment you display day after day!

**Gary Damon, Jr., MA, Deputy Commissioner—Youth Services**

## A Letter from the Youth Bureau Director

Happy Spring! It has been a winter that will be hard to forget but I believe we can safely assume that snow drifts, wind chills, driving bans and frozen pipes are only remnants of a long winter's dream. Cookouts, road trips, festivals and fun are right around the corner and we all deserve a lawn chair and a cold drink of lemonade. I know, however, that for many of you who may be reading this that there may only be time for a sip of that lemonade because of the great need that a long summer, and a longer ten weeks off from school, creates in our community. Providing quality youth development opportunities for our youth during the summer months is absolutely critical to their success. Whether simply providing a creative outlet for energies, diverting youth from risky behavior or stemming the tide of summer learning loss, the hours that youth spend in quality summer programs is time that can change the course of lives for the better. The Youth Bureau is thrilled with the enthusiastic response we received for the Primetime RFP and are very impressed with the quality and innovation we have read about in the many proposals. We very much look forward to seeing this work be put into practice and are excited for the youth of Erie County that so many caring, competent and passionate adults will be spending the summer working to create for them better outcomes. Hope to see you all soon and maybe even take a moment to enjoy a lemonade (or iced tea) together.

**Benjamin Hilligas, MSW, Youth Bureau Director**



## Youth Bureau and Youth Board Gear Up for Primetime After Record Response

The Youth Bureau and the Youth Board are gearing up for another round of Summer Primetime funding!

A record number of agencies and local youth bureaus, a total of 68, responded to the Primetime RFP, which was released on February 13th and due on March 16th. While this means a LOT of reading for staff and Board members, it also means that our community has MANY committed folks dedicated to promoting positive youth development.

Interviews took place on March 31st at Erie 1 BOCES in West Seneca. Agencies and local youth bureaus are assigned scores and allocations are suggested. This is based on applications and interviews, as well as other factors such as critical need and past performance (for agencies funded currently and/or in the past). Allocations are then recommended to the Erie County Executive and the Erie County Legislature.



Staff and Board members are excited for another exciting summer of everything from swimming to horseback-riding to arts and crafts. We are also looking forward to academic enrichment and remediation. Summer is a time when knowledge can be lost and youth are at greater risk of finding trouble. Summer Primetime has been effective at keeping

at-risk youth occupied. Primetime is also a critical tool in developing character, leadership, as well as team-building skills.

We look forward to seeing all of our funded agencies' and local youth bureaus' programs in action this summer. Thank you to all of those who have applied for Summer Primetime funding. If you're reading this but have never applied for funding, or if you've applied in the past, we welcome all submissions and we encourage your agency or local youth bureau to complete an application next year. Let's keep up the great work!



## Franciscan Center: Transitional Independent Living Program

The Franciscan Center's mission is to assist young men in learning how to live a productive and meaningful life.

The Franciscan Center has over 30 years of experience providing quality service to runaway homeless youth and youth in conflict. Their Transitional Independent Living Program can accommodate up to eight young men, serving adolescent males ages 16-20 for up to eighteen months at a time.

The Franciscan Center addresses the needs of the youth in "body, mind, and spirit." This voluntary program provides shelter, food, case management, independent living skills, and LIFE STEPS, with staff supervision 24 hours

a day. The Franciscan Center is one of two Runaway & Homeless Youth providers funded by Erie County. It serves a critical need in our community.

*Says a resident, 'D', "I have grown as a person and learned that now is the time when I must be a mature young adult and no longer a child. Being here teaches me life skills such as cooking, cleaning, time management, and money management, that I will forever use in my life. I have been more involved in the community, now more than ever, and learned the value of a dollar and how valuable little things really are. Prior to coming to The Franciscan Center, I was going down the wrong path, and now I am on the right path to becoming a successful person in society."*

The Erie County Youth Bureau is proud to partner with the Franciscan Center and we appreciate the important work that they do with our at-risk youth.



## Young Audiences of Western New York: A Circle of Support

With the support of Erie County funding, Young Audiences of Western New York began placing teaching artists in the Youth Detention Center, located at 810 East Ferry Street in Buffalo, NY, almost five years ago. While in detention, youth were exposed to poetry and visual arts in a way that allowed them to explore and express themselves while being safely supported in a non-judgmental space.



The success of this program led to a unique collaboration between Young Audiences and the Erie County Department of Mental Health to create a direct services program that serves the youth once they leave the Detention Center.

What began as a pilot in the spring of 2013, is now an incredibly strong program at the Downtown Central Library that helps to change the lives of its participants through literacy, arts, reflection and community. Because of this success, Young Audiences reached out to Erie County again to partner on its newest venture: Artworks. This workforce development program has as its motto, "Hired to Create, Inspired to Succeed", giving students summer employment opportunities, working with master teaching artists for six weeks as well as learning job readiness and other 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills.

Each program runs concurrently with the hope that youth will be able to leave the detention center and grow with Young Audiences in such a way that recidivism is reduced and instead of

going back, they grow forward, learning to visualize and maximize their own potential and to see a reflection of their best selves through working in the arts.

Erie County is very excited to continue to grow and cultivate this partnership. The Youth Bureau gives great thanks for the important work that Young Audiences is doing, both in the Detention Center and in the larger community.



## Town of Clarence Toastmasters: Training Tomorrow's Leaders

The Town of Clarence Toastmasters' Youth Leadership Program helps students speak up and build communication skills. A Recognition Ceremony was held at the Town of Clarence Youth Bureau on Wednesday evening, March 11, 2015 at 6:00 pm to honor students who completed the eight-week course.

The Youth Leadership Program, sponsored and presented by the Clarence Toastmasters, was offered to area students ages 14-18 as part of the Youth Bureau's Fall and Winter Programming. The celebration on March 11<sup>th</sup> completed the eighth and final session with a Recognition Ceremony. Six students completed the program, the first of its kind to be offered in Clarence.

The eight sessions, 1 ½ hours each, included speaking and leadership components that helped students develop communication and leadership skills.

Meetings are similar to a typical Toastmasters' meeting with a format that includes impromptu speeches, prepared

speeches and evaluations.

It has been a rewarding experience that offers participants an opportunity to practice speaking in a non-threatening and supportive environment.

Participants learn to overcome nervousness when speaking before an audience, to organize and present ideas logically and convincingly, to listen carefully to others' ideas, to offer advice to help others improve their speaking and leadership skills, and to participate in and lead group discussions and meetings.

Toastmasters International is a non-profit organization.



## Erie County Youth Bureau

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**ECYB Mission: “To serve youth and families through asset development and advocacy, prevention, and intervention programs that strengthen families and communities.”**

[www2.erie.gov/  
socialservices](http://www2.erie.gov/socialservices) or search  
“Erie County Youth Bureau”

**To find out more information on the agencies mentioned in this edition, please contact them or visit their website using the information listed below:**

♦ **Town of Clarence**

\*10510 Main Street, Clarence, NY 14031  
\*716-407-2162  
\* [www2.erie.gov/clarence/index.php?q=youth-bureau](http://www2.erie.gov/clarence/index.php?q=youth-bureau)

♦ **The Franciscan Center**

\*1910 Seneca Street, Buffalo, NY 14210  
\*716-822-8017  
\* [www.franciscancenterinc.org](http://www.franciscancenterinc.org)

♦ **Young Audiences of Western New York**

\*1 Lafayette Square, Buffalo, NY 14203  
\*716-881-0917  
\* [www.yawny.org](http://www.yawny.org)

